

MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

DEFINITION:

Under general supervision, to deliver mental health education projects; to provide information and referral services; under direct supervision to provide triage, crisis intervention counseling, problem solving and case management; and to perform related work.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

All positions in this class are found in the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), Mental Health Division. Incumbents are involved in homeless outreach services, outpatient mental health, case management services and community mental health education projects. Counseling activities are limited to specific assignments and are performed under professional supervision. This class differs from the next higher level class, Mental Health Consultant I, in that the latter is responsible for delivery and evaluation of mental health projects, providing case consultation and training to community groups, and providing individual and group counseling to clients.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES:

Establishes contacts on behalf of clients with other health and social services providers, non-profit organizations, law enforcement agencies, volunteer, and special interest community organizations; assists in organizing community groups to meet special mental health needs; may co-facilitate discussion groups or act as co-facilitator while participating in psychoeducation groups or individual counseling sessions; performs case management activities for mentally ill clients including homeless individuals; performs psychosocial rehabilitation activities such as assisting with employment and social security applications; transports clients to appointments; assists individuals to gain access to health care; may plan re-socialization and recreational activities; provides crisis information, counseling and problem solving assistance to telephone callers; provides information about mental health services and makes presentations and develops audio-visual aids and written materials to disseminate information about mental health problems; maintains records and assists in preparing reports and evaluations and gains direct counseling experience under the supervision of a licensed mental health professional.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Thorough Knowledge of:

- Psychology and social work principles and theory.
- Principles of psychosocial rehabilitation.
- Crisis intervention and counseling techniques.
- Cultural and socio-economic factors impacting mental health.
- Dynamics of human behavior patterns in crisis situations related to bereavement, child or spouse abuse, drugs, rape, suicide, and relationship problems.
- Community resources.
- Pharmaceutical and street drugs and their interactions.
- Health and social service providers.

Skills and Abilities to:

- Listen to and assess problems.
- Refer clients to appropriate social or mental health services.
- Facilitate group discussion and self-help groups.
- Develop audio-visual and other information aids.
- Deliver presentations.
- Compile information and prepare reports and correspondence.
- Maintain records.
- Communicate effectively orally and in writing.

EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE:

Education, training or experience, which clearly demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities stated above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in counseling, psychology, social work, psychiatric nursing, or a closely related field; **AND**, one (1) year of experience providing mental health assessment and crisis intervention counseling in a mental health setting; **OR**,
2. An associate's degree from an accredited college or university; **AND**, three (3) years of experience providing mental health assessment and crisis intervention counseling in a mental health setting; **OR**,
3. California licensure as a psychiatric technician.

Note: Additional years of experience as described above may substitute for the education requirement on a year-for-year basis. Specialized training in crisis intervention is highly desirable for positions handling telephone crisis.

SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS:**License:**

A valid California Class C driver's license is required at time of appointment or the ability to arrange transportation for field travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their own personal vehicle.

Working Conditions:

Some positions require shift work. Incumbents may be subjected to hostile and abusive callers and/or potentially violent clients.

Background:

Applicants must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Convictions, depending on type, number, and recency may be disqualifying. Prior to appointment, candidates offered positions in Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) programs that deal with patients and/or drugs will be subject to a limited security clearance investigation performed by the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA).

